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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 000425

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2018  
TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM BM BE  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON REFERENDUM IN BURMA

REF: STATE 26677

Classified By: POLCOUNS LYNN GURIAN. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

(C) PolCouns discussed reftel points March 20 with Renier Nijskens, MFA Director for South and West Asia and the Pacific. Ambassador Nijskens commented the Belgians are together with the U.S. on the points. He added the Burmese government is "taking us for a ride" and they "do not appreciate the leeway we have given them." Nijskens thinks the proposed constitutional changes will serve to institutionalize current government policies. The GoB is in favor of additional sanctions, such as one on financial transactions, but they want to consult the sectors involved to make certain such sanctions are workable before they approve them. He noted it took six months for the first list of sanctions to go into effect and commented that it took too long to start.

FOX

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